

Appln. No. 09/234,695
Amendment dated October 21, 2003
Reply to Office Action mailed April 21, 2003

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims (deleted text being struck through and added text being underlined):

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1. (Cancelled)
 2. (Cancelled)
 3. (Cancelled)
 4. (Cancelled)
 5. (Cancelled)
 6. (Cancelled)
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 8. (Cancelled)
 9. (Cancelled)
 10. (Cancelled)
 11. (Cancelled)
 12. (Cancelled)
 13. (Cancelled)
 14. (Cancelled)
 15. (Cancelled)
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16. (Cancelled) 7

1 17. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method
2 for processing signals related to trading shifts between employees,
3 the method comprising:

4 establishing, by management of an organization, a preliminary
5 schedule of shifts of a plurality of employees of the organization;

6 ~~accepting making, after establishment of the preliminary~~
7 schedule of shifts by the management of the organization, a
8 conditional offer, by a first employee of the plurality of employees
9 who is assigned to work a first shift of a first type of job, to trade
10 the first shift for another shift of another employee of the plurality
11 of employees, the first type of job having predetermined minimum

12 training requirements required of employees qualified to perform
13 the first type of job, the predetermined minimum training
14 requirements for each type of job being stored in a training
15 requirements database, training qualifications for each employee of
16 the plurality of employees being stored in a training qualifications
17 database;

18 displaying to other employees of the plurality of employees
19 the conditional offer to trade the first shift for another shift;

20 receiving a conditional acceptance from a second employee to
21 trade a second shift of a second type of job assigned to the second
22 employee for the offered first shift of the first employee; and

23 checking, after the second employee has submitted the
24 conditional acceptance, training qualifications data for the first and
25 second employees stored in the training qualifications database;

26 comparing the training qualifications data for the second
27 employee against the predetermined minimum training requirements
28 for the first type of job of the first shift;

29 comparing the training qualifications data for the first

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30 employee against the predetermined minimum training requirements
31 for the second type of job of the second shift;

32 rejecting a trade of the first shift of the first employee for the
33 second shift of the second employee if the training qualifications
34 data of the second employee does not meet the predetermined
35 minimum training requirements for the first type of job or if the
36 training qualifications data of the first employee does not meet the
37 predetermined minimum training requirements for the second type of
38 job;

39 confirming a ~~the~~ trade of the first shift of the first employee
40 for the second shift of the second employee upon verification of
41 criteria, ~~or rejecting the trade of the first shift for the second shift~~
42 ~~upon non-verification of the criteria if the trade has not been~~
43 rejected;

44 ~~wherein the step of confirming includes checking training data~~
45 ~~associated with the second employee in a training data database, and~~
46 ~~comparing the training data associated with the second employee~~
47 ~~with training requirements associated with a work area function to~~
48 ~~be performed on the first shift to verify that the second employee is~~
49 ~~qualified to perform the work area functions associated with the~~
50 ~~first shift;~~

51 wherein the step of confirming includes checking a length of
52 time between a time of receipt of the conditional acceptance and a
53 time of occurrence of the first shift and the second shift against a
54 minimum time period for trading shifts to verify that the length of
55 time is not less than the minimum time period;

56 additionally including displaying to the second employee,
57 upon confirmation of the trade, notifications relevant to the a work
58 area function of associated with the first shift type of job and the
59 training data associated with the second employee;

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60 additionally including indicating to the first employee, upon
61 confirmation of the trade, the confirmation of the trade; and
62 additionally including restricting access to information about
63 the trade of the first shift for the second shift upon confirmation of
64 the trade.